

The Plan for the Russian Revolution

By Alexander Parvus Helphand

This extensive document, in its original form and in the words of its author, comprises twenty pages:

Preparation of a Mass Political Strike in Russia

A mass political strike is to be prepared in Russia for the spring under the slogan: Freedom and Peace. The center of the movement will be Petersburg; here again, the Obukhov, Putilov, and Baltic Works. The strike is to encompass the Petersburg-Warsaw railway lines and the Southwest Railway. The railway strike will be carried out primarily in the large central plants with large workforces, the railway workshops, etc. For the purpose of its generalization, the railway bridges will be blown up everywhere, if possible, as was the case during the strike movement of 1904/1905.

Conference of Russian Socialist Leaders

This work can only be accomplished under the leadership of Russian Social Democracy. The radical section of the latter has already taken action. It is necessary that the moderate minority faction also join in.

Up to now, it has mostly been the radicals who have prevented unification.

However, the leader of the latter, Lenin, himself raised the question of unification with the minority two weeks ago. An agreement along a middle line in the sense of the need to exploit the weakening of the administrative apparatus within the country caused by the war to initiate energetic action against absolutism should be possible. It should be noted that the moderate section has always been most strongly influenced by German Social Democracy. Through the personal authority of some leaders of German and Austrian Social Democracy, much could still be achieved with them now

After careful preliminary investigations, a congress of the Social Democratic leaders of Russia must be convened in Switzerland or another neutral country. The following should participate in the congress:

1. The Social Democratic Majority Party,
2. The Minority Party,
3. The Jewish Bund,
4. The Ukrainian organization: Spilka,
5. The Polish Social Democratic Party,
6. The Social Democratic Party of Poland,
7. The Social Democratic Party of Lithuania,
8. The Finnish Social Democracy.

The congress will only take place if the unanimity of the decisions regarding the initiation of immediate action against Tsarism has been assured beforehand

It is possible that the congress would have to be preceded by a discussion between the majority and minority parties of the Russian Social Democracy. The following could possibly also be called upon to participate in the congress:

9. the Armenian party Dashnakzutian,
10. Hindzhak.

Apart from its eminent organizational significance, the congress would also immediately exert a major impact on public opinion in France and England through its resolutions.

The Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries

Special negotiations must be conducted with the party of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries. These people are more nationalistically minded. However, their influence in working-class circles is minimal. In Petersburg, they only have a number of supporters at the Baltic Works. In a matter of a mass strike, they can be eliminated without harm. On the other hand, their sphere is the peasantry, where they exert a significant influence through the mediation of elementary school teachers.

Partial Movements

Hand in hand with this preparatory work, in order to create an organizational basis for the mass strike, immediate agitation must be initiated now. Connections can be established via Bulgaria and Romania with Odessa, Nikolayev, Sebastopol, Rostoff-on-Don, Batum, and Baku. The Russian workers have in these During the revolution, local and professional demands were put forward in certain areas, which were first granted to them and then taken away from them.

They have not given up the fight for these demands: only two years ago, a major strike of sailors and dockworkers took place, which brought the old wishes back onto the agenda.

The agitation would have to begin at these points and at the same time take a political turn. A general strike in the Black Sea basin is hardly feasible given the prevailing unemployment, but partial strikes are certainly possible in Nikolayev, Rostoff-on-Don, and in individual professions in Odessa.

Such strikes would have a symptomatic significance in that they would disturb the calm that came with the war in the internal struggles of the Tsarist Empire

To carry out this agitation, among other things, the organization of Russian sailors, which in recent years had its headquarters in Constantinople and then in Alexandria, must be re-established. The center would now have to be Constanta or Galatz. Since the cities of the Black Sea will be greatly disturbed by the naval war, this makes them particularly susceptible to political agitation.

Special efforts must be made to ensure that the revolutionary organizations in Odessa, supported by the workers, seize control of the city administration, as in 1905, in order to alleviate the plight of the poorer classes, who are suffering terribly from the war. This, too, would have the purpose of giving a new impetus to the general revolutionary movement. Should an uprising break out in Odessa, it could be supported by the Turkish fleet.

The prospects for an uprising of the Black Sea Fleet can only be determined after more contact has been established with Sebastopol

In Baku and the petroleum region, a strike can be brought about relatively without particular difficulties. It is also not without significance that a large portion of the workers are Tatars, i.e., Muslims. If a strike does occur, attempts will be made to set fire to the nafta springs and the petroleum depots, as in 1905. Strikes are also possible in the Donetsk mining region. Conditions are particularly favorable in the Urals. There, the socialist majority party has a strong following. Political strikes among the miners can be easily carried out if some money is available, because the population is very poor.

Siberia

Special attention should be paid to Siberia. In Europe, it is known only as the land of exile. But it lives along the great Siberian traces, along the railway and the rivers, a strong peasant class, proudly independent, which would prefer to remain unmolested by the central government.

In the cities live an energetic merchant class and a layer of intellectuals composed of political exiles or under their influence. The Siberian constituencies send socialist representatives to the Duma. During the revolutionary movement of 1905, the entire administration was in the hands of the revolutionary committees. The administrative apparatus is extremely weak. The military has been reduced to a minimum, since people feel safe from Japan.

These conditions make it possible to establish a few centers of action in Siberia. At the same time, precautions would have to be taken to allow the political deportees to escape to European Russia.

This is purely a question of money. In this way, several thousand of the most capable agitators, who possess extensive connections and enjoy unlimited authority, can be directed to the above-mentioned agitation centers and to Petersburg. This measure can, of course, only be carried out by the socialist organizations themselves, which alone are sufficiently informed about the suitability of the individual personalities.

All these actions will develop and interlock with one another the more decisively the socialist organizations act and the more their activities are coordinated. On the other hand, these

actions themselves, which must be initiated immediately for this reason alone, will spur the socialist party centers and drive them toward unity.

Press campaign

At the same time, the direction of action within the Russian socialist parties must be emphasized through discussion in the press, brochures, etc.

Brochures in Russian can be published in Switzerland. A Russian newspaper, Golos, is published in Paris and is edited by some leaders of the minority socialist party. Despite the exceptional conditions under which it appears, this newspaper has maintained a thoroughly objective stance toward the war. It will not be able to avoid participating in the discussion on party tactics. The Swiss and Italian socialist newspapers can also be called upon for these discussions, as can the Danish, Dutch, Swedish, and American socialist press. German socialist leaders of international renown could easily participate in this discussion

A press campaign would also have a significant impact on the attitude of the neutral states, especially Italy, which would even extend to the socialist circles of France and England. Even an objective discussion of the war events, which can only be conveyed to England and France under a socialist flag, albeit still with great difficulty, would be of great

The socialist press of Bulgaria and Romania is easily influenced in favor of an energetic struggle against Tsarism. Since the central office for revolutionary agitation in southern Russia will be located in Romania, the attitude of the Romanian daily press is important for this reason alone, and even more so for determining Romania's own position on the war. The major Romanian newspapers are all in Russian service

The financial obligations should be of such a nature that they would be difficult to break. However, it would not be particularly difficult to organize a group of respected journalists to publish a large, independent daily newspaper with a pronounced tendency toward closer ties with Germany. Since the Romanian press is aligned with Russia's victory, it has already lost considerable prestige due to the course of the war so far. The new newspaper, however, would

acquire an audience through its objective reporting. As events progressed, it would increasingly concentrate public opinion around itself and also force the rest of the press to change its stance.

Agitation in North America

Special attention must be paid to the United States. The many Russian Jews and Slavs in the United States and Canada constitute a very receptive element for agitation against Tsarism. The Russian Social Democrats and the Jewish Bund have been sent to tour these regions. In addition to their own public appearances, they would stimulate the local forces to a vigorous stand, strengthen the organizations that strengthen the numerous Russian and Jewish press, and thus bring about systematic activity.

Given the numerous connections of the millions of Russian emigrants, most of whom left their homeland only recently, with Russia, this would be of great importance. Nor would the movement among Russian emigrants in America fail to have an effect on American public opinion. In addition, Agitational forces should be channeled from these circles to Russia

The German element would also have to appear more actively in the current war, which concerns the future of the German nation. A strong movement against the tsardom among the Russians, or rather among the Russian Jews of America, would favor the Germans' actions. Some speakers from the German and Austrian Social Democrats would have to be sent over.

Growth of the Revolutionary Movement

The agitation in the neutral states will have a strong repercussion on the agitation in Russia itself, and vice versa. Further developments depend to a large extent on the events of the war. The Russian hurrah mood of the first days has already diminished considerably. The tsardom needs quick victories and suffers bloody defeats. If the Russian army remains confined to its current positions during the winter, discontent will spread immensely throughout the country. Through the agitation apparatus outlined above, this discontent will be exploited, deepened, expanded, and carried in all directions. The strikes here and there, the emergency uprisings, the growing political agitation—all this will embarrass the Tsarist government. If it resorts to reprisals, this will generate growing bitterness; if it shows leniency, this will be

perceived as a sign of weakness and will only inflame the revolutionary movement. We had enough experience in this regard in 1904/1905.

If, however, the Russian army suffers a major defeat, the movement against the regime could quickly assume unimagined dimensions.

In any case, it can be expected that, if all forces are mobilized according to the plan outlined above, a mass political strike will break out in the spring. If the mass strike spreads further, the tsardom will have to concentrate the military forces at its disposal at home, primarily in Petersburg and Moscow.

In addition, the government will need troops to protect the railway connections. During the December strike of 1905, two regiments were needed just to protect the Petersburg-Moscow line. Only in this way was it possible to counter the strikers' repeated attempts to blow up the railway bridges near Tver and elsewhere and to transfer the guards regiments to Moscow, which alone suppressed the uprising. Even if the main focus of the upcoming strike is to be on railway connections in the West, attempts will still be made to provoke railway strikes wherever possible. Even if this does not succeed everywhere, the Tsarist government will nevertheless have to deploy large military forces to protect the bridges, stations, etc? At the same time, the administrative apparatus will fall into confusion and disarray.

The Peasant Movement and the Ukraine

An important side effect of these events is likely to be the peasant movements, as in 1905. Peasant conditions in Russia have not improved since then, but worsened. In the eyes of the Russian peasant, the whole thing is a land question. He will therefore once again plow the land of the landlords and threaten the landlords

Essentially, the question of defending landed property forms the basis of the Russian peasant question, but its solution is also closely linked to the formation of cooperatives, organizations of cheap credit, school education, the tax system, and general state administration.

For Ukraine, all of this flows into the demand for autonomy. As long as the rule of the tsarist regime exists, whose policy in Ukraine was to give the land to the Muscovite nobility and to protect the Muscovite large landowners against the Ukrainian peasants by all means, the peasants cannot help but rebel as soon as they notice that the pressure of the government has eased or that the government is in difficulties

However, one of the first tasks of the Ukrainian government will be to establish law and order instead of the anarchic conditions that are a consequence of the Muscovite regime, and it will be able to achieve this quickly, supported by the trust of the Ukrainian people. The formation of an independent Ukraine will appear both as liberation from the tsarist regime and as salvation from the chaos of peasant unrest.

If peasant unrest breaks out in Central Russia-and the Great Russian peasants will not remain calm under any circumstances if the Ukrainian peasants rise up alongside them-then the Party of - Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries will also have to emerge from its inactivity. This party, through the mediation of elementary school teachers, has significant influence among the Great Russian peasantry and is authoritative for the Duma faction of the Trudoviks, the Peasant People's Party. The position of the Russian Social-Democracy in connection to the peasant unrest would readily follow from their decision to take active action against Tsarism.

Movement in Finland

In the midst of this general movement, a significant action could be undertaken in Finland. The Finnish parties are in a difficult situation. There is a significant Russian military presence in the country. On the other hand, the Finns do not want to be annexed by Sweden without further ado Sweden does not want to annex Finland, but only to make it a buffer state, that is, an independent state. The Swedish party among them forms a small minority. Therefore, the main aim must be to achieve an agreement between the Swedish government and the leading parties, the most important of which is the Social Democrats. This could be achieved, for example, by guaranteeing the Finns the greatest possible self-government and leaving it up to them to decide which state association they wish to join. Once such an agreement has been reached, a general uprising can be prepared systematically and quietly in Finland

Finnish Social Democracy possesses excellent organizations similar to those of German Social Democracy. The entire Finnish people have been trained to secrecy and quiet cooperation through the tenacious defense of their rights against tsarist despotism, and the difference in language greatly favors this.

Everything is to be prepared in secret until a major political strike movement takes hold in Russia. Then part of the military concentrated in Finland will be withdrawn to Petersburg. That would be the moment for a general uprising in Finland. Given Finland's immense size, the tsarist government would be faced with the choice of either dissolving the military forces at its disposal into small detachments to combat individual centers of insurrection, or concentrating these forces at the most important administrative and strategic points and leaving the country to the insurgents. The former was the tactic used by the tsardom to defeat the revolutionary movement of 1905. Numerous expeditionary corps, both large and small, were formed, their commanders possessing military and administrative authority. The plan was drawn up in St. Petersburg by a special commission, including members of the General Staff and the highest administration. The revolutionaries' executive powers were well aware of the commission's work, but they were unable to thwart the plan.

After all, the Tsarist government needed the strength of its entire army and two years to suppress the uprising. If the Tsarist government were to apply the same procedure in Finland, the Swedish army would have to intervene to protect Finland's independence. This procedure, which is arguably the best means of suppressing an uprising, renders the army completely helpless against invading enemy forces.

The Tsarist government will therefore probably choose the second course of action and withdraw the army to the administrative centers, i.e., to the coast and the adjacent railway. It may even destroy the railway connections with Sweden itself. Russian rule will then, in fact, extend only to the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. Masters in their own country, the insurgents will then form a national guard, as was already the case in 1904/05, take up defensive positions, and take

other precautions to facilitate the invasion of the Swedish troops, which will be made more difficult by the possible destruction of the railways

Much, of course, depends on the development of events in Petersburg Even before the outbreak of the general uprising, the Finns could be of great service. They can provide information about the number, disposition, and movements of Russian troops in Finland, as well as about the movement of the navy; they could establish a signal service to direct the activities of aircraft. (The Finns' habit of painting their country houses, and especially their roofs, red would be useful in this regard. A torn patch on the red roof provides a reference point.)

Furthermore, they can set up wireless telegraph stations and make arrangements for blowing up buildings and bridges. Above all, however, they can facilitate communication between the Russian revolutionaries and Petersburg Despite the military occupation, since the country is very large, borders directly on the Petersburg region, and maintains brisk hourly communication with Petersburg, a communications and transport service can be established. Arms depots could be set up, and weapons and explosives could be smuggled over to Petersburg.

The Caucasus

During the revolution, the tsarist government left the Caucasus almost unnoticed for a long time. Since it was not threatened from outside, it initially let whatever happened happen in the Caucasus. This even went so far that the government tolerated governors at the head of the administration who were in open contact with the revolutionary committees stood.

She was certain that once she had consolidated her rule in Russia

proper, she would also be able to subjugate the Caucasus again. This has also proven completely true.

This time, the situation has been completely changed by the Turkish-Russian war. The secession of the Caucasus is possible.

The significance of an uprising that takes place behind the rear of the fighting armies is also immediately clear. However, in contrast to Finland where a well-organized general uprising

can be carried out, the movement in the Caucasus will always suffer from national fragmentation and party strife. The Georgians (Gruysinians) were the strongest during the revolutionary years

Supported by the small peasant masses, they became complete masters of the Kutai Governorate, with their own administration and their own courts. At the head of the movement, however, were not the separatists, but the Social Democrats. The Armenians fought partly in the ranks of the Social Democrats; partly, they grouped themselves around the national Armenian parties, which had also long since abandoned their separatist tendencies.

It must be taken into account, however, that now, after the disappointments of the revolution and in view of the war, the separatist tendencies would gain popularity. The Tartar workers joined in the strikes. In general, the Tartar masses played a reactionary role; they allowed themselves to be incited against the Armenians by the agents of the St. Petersburg government, so that bloody clashes broke out between these two popular elements

Now, after the declaration of the holy war, the Tsarist government will no longer be able to openly rely on the Muslim population.

However, it will secretly stir up religious hatred and keep the Armenians in fear, precisely by referring to the holy war. It is therefore necessary, first of all, that the Turkish side do everything possible to make it clear to the Muslims of the Caucasus that the holy war, in particular, requires close cooperation between the Muslims and their Christian neighbors in the fight against Tsarism. An alliance must immediately be concluded with the Young Turks and the Armenian parties in Turkey, which are the same as those in Russia

The details of this action, in which various difficulties must be overcome, are beyond the scope of this memorandum. It should only be pointed out that a decisive appearance by the Russian Social Democracy would have the greatest influence on the action of the Armenians and Georgians in the Caucasus. The Social Democracy could possibly take the entire movement into its own hands; it would therefore, in any case, force the national parties, by their appearance, to

enter the struggle on their part. For this reason, too, the conference of the socialist party leaders of Russia envisaged above is an urgent necessity.

The holy war, which can bring about great movements in Persia, Egypt, North Africa, etc., will hardly have a great effect in Russia. The Tartars on the Volga and Koma will certainly not budge. They are extremely peaceful, completely oppressed peasants, opposed by the enormous numerical superiority of the Russian population.

In the Caucasus, the situation is somewhat different; but one must recognize that it has long since been pacified. Memories of the old heroic struggle for independence have faded. The Muslim population is not yet sufficiently culturally advanced for a modern revolutionary movement. The old struggle of the mountain voice of the Caucasus against Russia was a struggle against the centralized state in general. Since then, the tribal organization has been completely worn down. The tribal chiefs have turned into landowners. The connection between them and the masses is only weak.

The population's sense of independence has been lost. Since they feel themselves inferior to the Christian peoples in economic and cultural terms, they lean on the government as the strongest of the strong. They would certainly prefer a Muslim government; but this would first have to prove itself strong enough to defeat the Tsarist government

The Turkish army will be favorably received, but it will have to defeat the Russian power by its own strength. This, of course, does not rule out the formation of isolated bands, especially on the Persian border. A large-scale partisan war among the Muslim population is unthinkable in the Caucasus. An uprising of the Kuban Cossacks is not outside the possibility; here, Ukrainian propaganda could well prepare the ground.

Conclusion of the Movement

The growth of the revolutionary movement in the Tsarist Empire will, among other things, create a state of general unrest. In addition to the general course of war events, special measures could be taken to intensify this unrest. For obvious reasons, the Black Sea basin and the Caucasus come into particular consideration.

Nikolayev deserves special attention, as work is being carried out with the greatest haste at the shipyards there to launch two large warships. An attempt should be made to bring about a workers' strike. This does not necessarily have to be political in nature; it can also be based on the workers' economic demands.

It can be put forward as a thesis that the tsarist government needs quick victories in order to maintain its power. The present situation, in which the Russian army is being methodically worn down without making any progress, must, if this continues until spring, result in a revolution.

However, the difficulties that stand in the way of the movement should not be overlooked

First and foremost, there is the mobilization that has deprived the country of its most energetic, younger elements, and then the growth of national feeling that the war brought about. In view of the lack of success in the struggle, this very feeling must turn into bitterness and turn against tsarism. It must also be borne in mind that Russian Social Democracy will never, like the Ukrainians or the Finns, take a hostile stance toward the Reich.

Russian Social Democracy united over a million workers in its organizations during the revolution; its popularity among the masses has grown so much since then that the government felt compelled to change the electoral law twice, fearing that the Duma would be flooded with Social Democratic deputies

Such a party can only be the expression of the interests and moods of the popular masses. They did not want the war, but they participated in it. Russian Social Democracy resolutely opposes the unlimited external expansion of power, which Tsarist diplomacy strives for. It sees this as a tremendous obstacle to the internal development of the nations that make up the Empire, including the Russian nation. It holds the Tsarist government responsible for this war. It will therefore hold the government accountable for the uselessness and lack of success of the war. Its demands will be: the overthrow of the government and a rapid conclusion of peace.

Should the revolutionary movement gain greater ground, even if the Tsarist government still retains power in Petersburg, a provisional government would be installed, which could put the question of an armistice and the conclusion of peace on the agenda and itself enter into diplomatic negotiations on this matter

Should the Tsarist government itself be forced to conclude an armistice sooner, the more the revolutionary movement is prepared now, the greater the force it will erupt. If the Tsarist government succeeds in retaining power during the war, it will never be able to hold on after a peace dictated from outside. Thus, through the united armies and through the revolutionary movement in Russia, the tremendous political centralization that the Tsarist Empire represents and which, as long as it exists, will be a danger to world peace, must be shattered, and the stronghold of political reaction in Europe must be overthrown.

Siberia

Siberia must be given special importance because the large deliveries of artillery and other arms from the United States to Russia are likely to take the route via Siberia. The Siberian action must therefore be treated separately from the others. A few energetic and prudent people, equipped with sufficient means, would have to be sent on a special mission to Siberia to blow up the railway bridges. There will be enough help among the exiles. Explosives would have to be procured from the Ural mines; smaller quantities could probably be smuggled over via Finland. The technical instructions would have to be worked out here.

Press campaign

The prediction about Romania and Bulgaria has been confirmed by the developments that occurred after the memorandum was written. The Bulgarian press is now completely on the German side, while a turnaround is noticeable in the Romanian press. The precautions we have taken will soon produce even greater results. It is now especially important to get to work.

1. Financial support for the Social Democratic majority faction, which is continuing the fight against the Tsarist government by all means. The leaders are to be sought out in Switzerland.

2. Establish direct preconditions with the revolutionary organizations in Odessa and Nikolayev via Bucharest and Jassy.
3. Establish a connection with the organization of Russian seamen.

Preconditions have already been established through a gentleman in Sofia; further connections lead via Amsterdam.

4. Support for the activities of the Jewish socialist organization

The League - not Zionists

5. Visiting leading figures of Russian Social Democrats,

Socialist-Revolutionaries in Switzerland,

Copenhagen, and Stockholm, and promoting their efforts insofar as they are determined to take energetic and immediate action against Tsarism.

6. Supporting Russian revolutionary writers insofar as they are the continuation of the fight against Tsarism even during the war.
7. Connection with the Finnish Social Democrats.
8. Organization of congresses of Russian revolutionaries.
9. Influencing public opinion in neutral states, especially the socialist press and socialist organizations, in favor of the fight against Tsarism and joining the Central Powers. This has already been done successfully in Bulgaria and Romania. It must be continued in Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Italy.
10. Equip an expedition to Siberia with the specific purpose of blowing up the most important railway bridges and thus preventing Russian arms shipments from America. The expedition would also have to be equipped with ample funds to enable a number of political deportees to escape into the interior of the country.

11. Technical preparations for an uprising in Russia: a) Obtain accurate maps of Russian railways and identify the most important bridges whose destruction is necessary to paralyze traffic; also identify the central buildings, depots, and workshops that should receive the most attention.

b) Likewise, specify the quantity of explosives necessary to achieve the objective in each individual case. This should take into account the scarcity of materials and the difficult conditions under which the operation will be carried out.

c) Clear and popular instructions on the handling of explosives for bridge demolitions and the demolition of large buildings. d) Simple recipes for preparing explosives.

e) Development of a plan for the resistance of the insurgent population in Petersburg against the armed forces, with special consideration for the working-class districts. Protection of houses and streets. Protection against cavaliers and invading infantry. The Jewish Socialist League in Russia is a revolutionary organization that relies on the working masses and already achieved significant results in 1904. It is in opposition to the Zionists. Not much can be expected from the latter.

A) Because their party affiliation is very loose.

B) Because a strong Russian-patriotic current during the war asserted itself in their ranks.

C) Because after the Balkan War the central government intensively sought the favor of English and Russian diplomacy, which of course did not prevent it from also lobbying the Reich government.

Because it is incapable of any political action at all.